

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/16/6
MEETING	DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY (BUDGET MEETING)
DATE OF MEETING	19 FEBRUARY 2016
SUBJECT OF REPORT	EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME (ESMCP)
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>that, subject to receipt of satisfactory assurances to the risks identified in paragraph 4.2 of this report, the Chief Fire Officer be delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Committee, to confirm this Authority's intention to migrate to the new Emergency Services Network as part of the ESMCP.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The existing contract for a mobile communications service (Firelink for the fire service) is due to expire between 2016 and 2020. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is the preferred option of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for replacing this contract.</p> <p>DCLG has indicated that it will meet all reasonable transition costs in moving between the contracts.</p> <p>While other options are available to fire and rescue authorities, there are significant risks in not joining the nationally preferred contract and DCLG will not provide funding for transition to any alternative selected.</p> <p>Fire and rescue authorities must indicate their intention to migrate to ESMCP or not by 25 March 2016</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Nil
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing human rights and equalities legislation
APPENDICES	A. Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) Financial Information and Sign-Off Pack for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Nil

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Authority with the information required to make an informed decision about participation in the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), intended to deliver a new Emergency Services Network (ESN.)
- 1.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has committed to provide all reasonable transition funding for those fire and rescue authorities moving on to ESMCP. Before significant funding is provided to fire and rescue authorities, however, DCLG requires Chief Fire Officers (or appropriate individuals) to provide a signed commitment to take up the new service. This is required by 25 March 2016.
- 1.3 DCLG believes that the ESMCP provides the best solution for updating and enhancing the fire and rescue service's emergency communications system having identified the following benefits:
- cheaper overall when compared to Firelink costs, saving the fire and rescue service nationally some £80m up to 2032;
 - fire and rescue services will be able to make further efficiencies by reconfiguring data and connections to suit their specific needs and by deciding on the scale and timing of device refresh;
 - future savings are likely as the new ESN is linked to commercial providers and as such tenders will take place in a competitive environment rather than via a monopoly provider;
 - DCLG will support fire and rescue services with the cost of transition, removing a potentially costly barrier;
 - DCLG believes the new system will be more interoperable, resilient and will support data functions better than the current system
- 1.4 To assist fire and rescue authorities in deciding whether or not to commit to the ESMCP, DCLG has produced a Financial Information and Sign-Off Pack. A copy of the pack for this Authority is attached at Appendix A. This pack indicates, amongst other things, indicative net savings/costs for the Authority of adopting the ESMCP solution. It should be stressed that these figures are **indicative only**. As indicated in Section 4 of this report, this Authority would seek a number of reassurances, including that transition costs will be met in full and that the indicative operating costs are indeed realistic, prior to commitment to the ESMCP.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 ESMCP is a cross-government programme to replace the existing mobile communications service for the three emergency services (Firelink for the FRS) with a new commercial system based on 4G LTE.
- 2.2 Overall the objectives of ESMCP are to be:
- Better with integrated broadband data services; public service functionality; national coverage and high availability.
 - Smarter to be more flexible, to evolve and improve over time, pay only for features required by users.

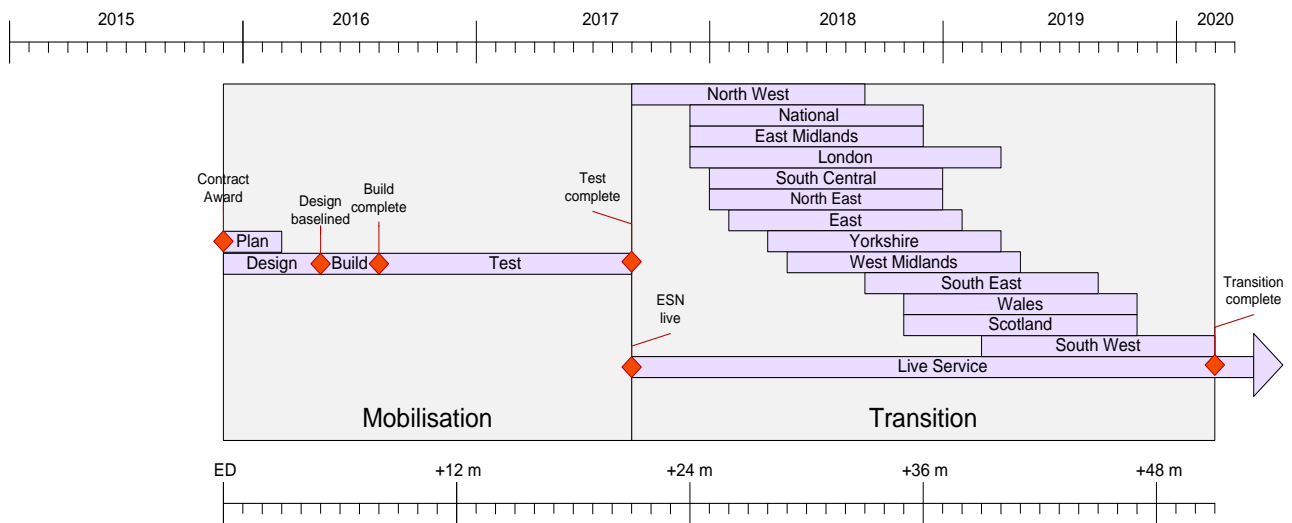
- Cheaper to address budget pressures, re-competed regularly to leverage market forces.

2.3 There are three strategic drivers that are influencing the scope and timing of ESMCP’s development. These are that:

- current contracts for the three services (provided by Airwave) expire between 2016 and 2020 and cannot readily be extended. As such there will be no Airwave Firelink service from the end of 2020 meaning that now is a good time to procure an alternative system;
- the current Airwave Firelink service is already significantly more expensive than similar public safety systems in Europe and price trends for publically available mobile telephony;
- users within the three emergency services are increasingly requiring broadband data (not just voice communications) to support operational transformation. This cannot be met by current Airwave technologies.

2.4 The delivery and realisation of the new Emergency Services Network via ESMCP will take place in two major stages. Initially there will be a transition stage whereby fire and rescue services will prepare for and undertake the switch to ESN, followed by the “steady state” stage whereby fire and rescue services will be fully utilising the ESN.

2.5 The table below provides the baseline timetable for how and when the mobilisation and transition process will operate.



2.6 As with many significant change programmes, ESMCP will incur some significant transition costs as fire and rescue services move from one communications system to another. To secure a smooth and effective transition, DCLG has made a commitment to support fire and rescue authorities in meeting the costs of transition. Details regarding the individual costs of transition will be provided over the first two quarters of 2016.

- 2.7 During their transition, fire and rescue authorities will continue to pay the costs of Firelink (and receive the associated New Burdens Grant) until the point at which they have completed transition and no longer require a connection to Airwave (except for interworking in instances of mutual aid). Once a fire and rescue authority has completed its transition fully, it will then begin paying for the ESN service, benefitting from the greater functionality this provides - in most cases at a lower cost. DCLG contends, therefore, that it is in the best interests of a fire and rescue authority to facilitate a timely completion of transition to maximise the reduced costs benefit of ESN. There will be no period when a fire and rescue authority will be paying for both Airwave and ESN.
- 2.8 DCLG has indicated it will provide funding for:
- Local Transition Support;
 - Control Rooms and Public Services Network;
 - Vehicle Installations;
 - Devices;
 - Regional Implementation Managers.
- 2.9 The figures for devices, connections and vehicle installations and fit-outs have been derived from a DCLG survey conducted in April 2014. Whilst DCLG believes that this survey gives a good indication of costs, it is understood that some changes are likely to occur. The programme will undertake a more up to date survey during Spring 2016.

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 Whilst DCLG is currently not mandating the take up of ESMCP, it is strongly recommending that fire and rescue authorities sign up to the system both from a financial and operational perspective.
- 3.2 DCLG recognises that fire communications systems continue to be the responsibility of each individual fire and rescue authority. Central government has a strong interest, however, in ensuring that the country is fully prepared to deal with civil contingency issues. As such the Government believes it is important to have in place a communications system that enables inter-operability working across boundaries and the emergency services. Any emergency services communications must therefore be robust and resilient, using the latest technology to aid the delivery of a more effective service.
- 3.3 The Government considered a range of options for updating emergency service communications as part of the Outline Business Case for ESMCP. The result of this options analysis was that ESMCP (an enhanced commercial Long-Term Evolution network) provided a compelling case going forward. ESMCP will provide a system that is:
- robust, interoperable and contains data capabilities
 - smart in that it only charges only for what is used
 - cheaper overall than the existing system
 - contains scope for future efficiencies as it is linked to a commercial system.

- 3.4 In deciding whether to go ahead with ESMCP, the Authority should be aware that maintaining the status quo (Airwave system) will not be an option. Airwave is due to come to an end in 2019 (with scope for a further one year contractual extension until 31 December 2020). As such, a change in communication system will need to take place regardless of whether the Authority decides to sign up to ESMCP or not.
- 3.5 The table below highlights a variety of alternatives to ESMCP together with the Government's rationale as to why these are not viable when compared to the benefits that ESMCP will bring.

Economic Option	Description
Option1 – Do Nothing	Existing Airwave contracts naturally expire. No central involvement in procurement of replacement services.
Option 2– Continue with a TETRA network (Do minimum)	Procure a private TETRA network with public safety voice and narrow-band data augmented by locally-procured operational broadband data services. This requires 400MHz spectrum which is not available until 2020
Option 3 –Build a new private LTE network	Procure a private LTE network with public safety voice and broadband data services. This requires 700MHz spectrum which is unlikely to be available until 2020
Option 4 – Enhanced Commercial LTE Service*	Transition to a commercial LTE network when Airwave contracts expire. Additional procurement of necessary public safety features to enhance the network

4. **NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 DCLG requires a formal response from each fire and rescue authority's Chief Fire Officer, by Friday 25 March 2016, as to whether or not they intend to migrate onto the new Emergency Services Network as part of the ESMCP. This will allow DCLG to have the assurance it needs to be able to distribute the required funding for transition in line with the Programme timescales.
- 4.2 The following risks have been identified with the proposal received from DCLG that require further clarification prior to CFO sign off:
- confirmation that absolutely all transition costs will be met and that the operating figures provided in the financial information (although indicative) are realistic; and
 - confirmation that the geographical coverage of ESMCP will be at least as good as the current Airwave provision.
- 4.3 These queries have been raised through the Regional Co-ordination Manager.

4.4 In light of this, it is recommended that, subject to receipt of satisfactory assurances to the risks identified in paragraph 4.2 above, the Chief Fire Officer be delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources Committee, to confirm this Authority's intention to migrate to the new Emergency Services Network as part of the ESMCP.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer